

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:**

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (currently amended): A host management apparatus being placed on a network to which hosts of an electronic conference system are connected, comprising:
  - a host authentication section for authenticating a selected host based on a user key that is unique to users of the host management apparatus; and
  - a host information registration section for registering host information including IP address information of a host authenticated by said host authentication section.
2. (original): The host management apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:
  - a host information storage section for storing the host information of the host authenticated by said host authentication section.
3. (original): The host management apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising:
  - a host information update section for updating the host information stored in the host information storage section.
4. (original): The host management apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the host information update section updates the host information in a predetermined cycle.

5. (original): The host management apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:  
a host information exchange section for mutually exchanging the host information  
between said host management apparatus and another host management apparatus.
6. (original): The host management apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising:  
a host information exchange section for mutually exchanging the host information  
between said host management apparatus and another host management apparatus.
7. (original): The host management apparatus according to claim 3, further comprising:  
a host information exchange section for mutually exchanging the host information  
between said host management apparatus and another host management apparatus.
8. (original): The host management apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising:  
a host information exchange section for mutually exchanging the host information  
between said host management apparatus and another host management apparatus.
9. (original): The host management apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the host  
information exchange section exchanges the host information in a predetermined cycle.
10. (original): The host management apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the host  
information exchange section exchanges the host information in a predetermined cycle.

11. (original): The host management apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the host information exchange section exchanges the host information in a predetermined cycle.

12. (original): The host management apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the host information exchange section exchanges the host information in a predetermined cycle.

13. (currently amended): A host management method of managing hosts of an electronic conference system on a network, comprising the steps of:

authenticating a selected host based on a user key that is unique to users of the host management apparatus; and

registering host information including IP address information of a host authenticated in said step of authenticating the selected host.

14. (original): The host management method according to claim 13, further comprising the steps of:

storing the host information of the host authenticated in said step of authenticating the selected host;

updating the stored host information; and

acquiring host information of a host that enables to be connected for taking part in a conference.

15. (currently amended): A computer-readable medium having embodied thereon a host management program of a host management apparatus being placed on a network to which hosts of an electronic conference system are connected, ~~causing a computer to perform the program~~ performing a method comprising:

~~a host authentication function of authenticating a selected host~~ based on a user key that is unique to users of the host management apparatus; and

~~a host information registration function of registering host information including~~  
IP address information of a host authenticated by the host authentication function.

16. (new): A host management system, comprising:  
a plurality of the host management apparatuses according to Claim 1;  
wherein the plurality of host management apparatuses are distant from one another; and  
wherein the plurality of host management apparatuses mutually exchange host information therebetween.